

*Against the Arians* (chap. *id.*).

According to Athanasius, the *Thalia* opened as follows :

<sup>f</sup> According to faith of God's elect,  
God's prudent ones, holy children,  
rightly dividing, God's Holy Spirit  
re-

ceiving,  
have I learned this from the  
partakers of wisdom, Accomplished,  
divinely taught, and wise in all things.  
Upon their track have I been  
walking, with like  
opinions. ! am very famous,  
the much suffering for God's

And taught of God, I have  
acquired wisdom and knowledge."

It is rather the unspeakable tediousness and frigid-ty of this exordium than its arrogant impiety that strikes the modern reader. Athanasius then proceeds to quote examples of Arius's "repulsive and most impious mockeries." For example, "God was not always a Father ; there was once a time when God was alone and was not yet a Father. But afterwards He became a Father." Or, "the Son was not always," or "the Word is not very God, but by participation in Grace, He, as all others, is God only in name." If these are good specimens of what Athanasius calls "the fables to be found in Arius's jocose composition," the standard of the jocose or the ridiculous must have altered greatly. Why such a poem should have been called the *Thalia* or "Merrymaking," it is hard to conceive.

Yet, one can understand how the ribald wits of Alexandria gladly seized upon this portentous **con-**